

The University of Chicago

A SURVEY OF AMERICAN ECONOMIC
FICTION, 1902-1909

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE
HUMANITIES IN CANDIDACY FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE
AND LITERATURE

1935

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LISLE ABBOTT ROSE

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Through the investigation of a half-dozen recent students,¹ the history of American economic and politico-economic fiction since the Civil War has become better known than it was ten years ago. But inasmuch as those historians who have covered the whole period have based their generalizations on a relatively small number of novels, it seems that the time has come for a more intensive study of part of the field. I have therefore drawn up a descriptive catalogue of about three hundred fifty novels and quasi-novels published between January, 1902, and June, 1909. Most of these were examined at first hand, and were then classified on several bases in an attempt to determine what trends could be found.

The works in which I was most interested dealt with industrial, financial, and commercial practices and conditions.² To

¹V. L. Parrington, The Beginnings of Critical Realism in America (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1930); V. F. Calverton, The Liberation of American Literature (New York: Scribner, 1932); John Chamberlain, Farewell to Reform (New York: Liveright, 1932); Granville Hicks, The Great Tradition (New York: Macmillan, 1933); Harry Hartwick, The Foreground of American Fiction (New York: American Book Co., 1934); and Allyn Forbes, "The Literary Quest for Utopia, 1880-1900," Social Forces, VII (1927), 179-89. In C. E. Merriam's American Political Ideas (2d ed.; New York: Macmillan, 1923) several novels are briefly described which literary historians have not yet treated.

²Historical novels proper were omitted. However, the catalogue includes a number of writings which, though allied to historical fiction, dealt with problems that were still of great public concern in the Roosevelt decade. Examples are Frederic Isham's Black Friday (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1904), Sarah Pratt Carr's The Iron Way (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1907), Irving Bacheller's A Hand-Made Gentleman (New York: Harper, 1909).

place these in perspective necessitated examining fiction which could be called political but which contained economic matter; it necessitated also the study of many slum stories, of fiction dealing with criminals and the administration of the criminal law, of "society" novels, and of a few novels harder to classify.¹

The broadest principle of classification adopted led to placing the productions into three very broad categories: conservative and reactionary documents; protests and exposures of conditions more or less deplorable; and works advocating remedies and reforms from a liberal or radical standpoint.² Numerous other divisions were employed in order that the novels might be viewed under as many lights as possible. In particular, the novels were put into seven groups on the basis of fundamental economic attitude--Far Left, Left, Left-center, Center, Right-center, Right, and Far Right.³

¹I gathered from derived sources alone information on fourteen "society" novels, ten volumes dealing with slum-dwellers and related types, two pro-labor works, and one political novel. The three last-named books could not be secured, but the nature of two of them is clear enough from data given in the Publishers' Weekly. My failure to read certain slum and society novels was intentional; only such members of these groups were examined at first hand as promised to contain industrial and commercial material or to deal with the justice of the American economic system. Thirteen which were read did not fulfil this promise. They are excluded from the final computations.

²Utopian romances should be included here, but they were treated sketchily because another student is examining them; see Ernest Leisy and Jay B. Hubbell, "Doctoral Dissertations in American Literature," American Literature, IV (1933), 458-9. Four Utopian romances only were read, but an attempt was made to determine how many were issued in 1902-09. Including the four referred to, nineteen publications of the Roosevelt period are certainly Utopian, and seven others may be.

³No single principle of division was used in allotting novels to these groups. Certain books are assigned on the basis of the doctrines or attitudes which they explicitly express, others on the basis of their tacit assumptions, still others on the basis of the violence or mildness with which they describe iniquities. As a matter of fact, about fifteen categories could be distinguished, but personal judgment enters so largely into the matter that seven categories appeared sufficient.

The results were analyzed not only in their raw form but as "weighted," attention being paid to evidences of popularity or unpopularity. Little of this work could be done with completeness; it proved impossible to overcome certain obstacles in the way of securing full evidence on reception or indeed on serialization. Exact knowledge of publication dates was often not to be had, and of dates of composition was seldom available.

The generalizations which resulted from the entire study are fewer than one could wish, and most of them are negative. They can be most broadly summed up as follows:

1) The economic and politico-economic fiction of the Roosevelt period shows few clear-cut trends, and a far less simple and logical pattern than has been thought.

2) This statement holds true even if attention is restricted to documents which were actually or ostensibly liberal and radical.

3) Certain generalizations offered by previous students require modification.

4) The contents of a trial bibliography which, mainly on the basis of secondary sources, I compiled for the period 1865-1901¹ imply, but only imply, that trends now indiscernible may perhaps be revealed, and correlations of literary and non-literary phenomena now impossible to establish may become justified, when the chronological scope of the investigation is extended.²

¹The trial bibliography contains two hundred one titles. Thirty-nine seem to be political novels; the rest are primarily economic. Slum stories were omitted. Many of these as well as approximately forty of the works listed in the trial bibliography have been treated by W. F. Taylor in his "Economic Unrest in American Fiction, 1880-1901" (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1930).

²A study of problem novels dealing with non-economic matters might possibly throw light on the relative importance of economic fiction from 1902-09, but this seems doubtful.

When one investigates the pertinent fiction of the Roosevelt period only, one can discover, on the part of authors and of readers, neither a straight-line nor a cyclical development of interest in economic and politico-economic topics.

The total number (three hundred thirty-one) of works studied which actually contain any economic matter cannot, unfortunately, be expressed as a percentage of the new fiction by American authors that was published from January, 1902, through June, 1909. Nor can percentages be given for any one year of the period.¹ Hence comparisons must be restricted to the mere number of pertinent novels in various years. Thirty-six were issued in 1902, 47 in 1903, 40 in 1908, and 20 in the first six months of 1909. The peak was 1905-06; in those twenty-four months 105 were published. But the curve for the period shows neither a progressive rise to 1905-06 nor a regular decline thereafter, and it discloses no rhythmical succession of peaks and valleys.

If the date of first publication (so far as it is ascertainable) be taken as the basis of measurement,² the curve changes but slightly. The years 1903, 1905, and 1906 increase their primacy somewhat; 1902 is unchanged; 1907 and 1908 show a barely noticeable decline.

If publication in periodicals and publication in book form are each to be considered as an integer, the curve is still flatter throughout the period, though 1905 and 1906 show peaks.

¹The tables of annual output as given by the Publishers' Weekly (in the final January number of each year) do not distinguish between new works of fiction by American authors, and reprints. In tabulating the books of 1905 and following years, certain kinds of reprints were omitted (see the Publishers' Weekly, LXXI [1906], 143). This policy merely makes the use of percentages still less informative.

²The earliest date at which serialization began is taken as the date of serialization. Only three or four writings changed their purpose or tone during magazine publication.

When popular reception is studied further, not much greater definiteness of pattern appears. Novels which are shown by seemingly reliable statistics to have had large sales were scattered throughout the period, though they were most numerous in 1903 and in 1906. They totaled eleven works.¹ Publishers' claims regarding On Satan's Mount,² Letters from a Son to his Self-Made Father,³ and A Little Brother of the Rich⁴ may be somewhat exaggerated.⁵ If they are taken at face value, then 1902 shows two high-selling books, 1903 four, 1904 one, 1906 three, 1907 one, and 1908 three. The addition of Edith Wharton's The House of Mirth⁶ and Robert Chambers's imitation of it, The Fighting

¹G. H. Lorimer, Letters from a Self-Made Merchant to his Son (Boston: Small, Maynard, 1902); H. L. Wilson, The Spenders (Boston: Lothrop, 1902); Frank Norris, The Pit (New York: Doubleday, Page, 1903); Thomas Dixon, Jr., The One Woman (New York: Doubleday, Page, 1903); G. H. Lorimer, Old Gorgon Graham (New York: Doubleday, Page, 1904); Charles Klein and Arthur Hornblow, The Lion and the Mouse (New York: Dillingham, 1906); Upton Sinclair, The Jungle (New York: Doubleday, Page, 1906); Winston Churchill, Coniston (New York: Macmillan, 1906); Thomas Lawson, Friday, the Thirteenth (New York: Doubleday, Page, 1907); Winston Churchill, Mr. Crewe's Career (New York: Macmillan, 1908); and F. Hopkinson Smith, Peter (New York: Scribner, 1908). For data on the sales of The Spenders, The One Woman, The Lion and the Mouse, The Jungle, and Friday, the Thirteenth see the following pages in the Publishers' Weekly: LXII (1902), 999; LXIV (1903), 766; LXXI (1907), 1281; LXX (1906), 21, 629; LXXI (1907), 1073. The Jungle sold one hundred thousand copies within six months after publication; for The One Woman sales of seventy thousand copies were asserted; for The Lion and the Mouse sales of fifty thousand copies within a year of publication; for Friday, the Thirteenth sales of thirty thousand in three weeks; and for The Spenders, a similar demand within a few weeks.

²G. T. Richardson and W. D. Quint, On Satan's Mount (Boston: C. M. Clark, 1903).

³G. T. Richardson and W. D. Quint, Letters from a Son to his Self-Made Father (Boston: Robinson, Luce, 1903).

⁴Joseph Medill Patterson, A Little Brother of the Rich (Chicago: Reilly and Britton, 1908).

⁵For the publishers' assertions see the Publishers' Weekly, LXIII (1903), 1298; LXV (1904), 127; and LXXIV (1908), 763.

⁶New York: Scribner, 1905.

Chance,¹ gives 1905 one title and raises 1906 to four titles.

The lists of best-sellers in the Bookman² reveal as great an interest during 1903 as do most other criteria, a decline beginning in November of 1903 and extending through the first third of 1904, and a fairly high level of popularity from September, 1905, to March, 1907, with April-December, 1906, as the peak. After a diminution of public interest there was some rise during the period from May, 1908, to June, 1909.³

¹New York: Appleton, 1906.

²All that the Bookman's lists do is to show, with rough accuracy, the relative popularity of novels within any month.

³Prominent among the best-sellers are not only three right-wing productions--The Letters of a Self-Made Merchant to his Son (1902-03), The One Woman (1903), and Peter (1908-09)--but The Pit (1903), The Jungle (1906), Coniston (1906), and Mr. Crewe's Career (1908). Less pertinent novels which nevertheless have been treated in this dissertation are The House of Mirth (1905), Lady Baltimore (New York: Macmillan, 1906), by Owen Wister, and The Fighting Chance (1906).

Less prominent places were taken by six conservative works: Meredith Nicholson, The Main Chance (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1903); Old Gorgon Graham; Gertrude Atherton, Rulers of Kings (New York: Harper, 1904); Alice French, The Man of the Hour (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1905); Harold McGrath, Half a Rogue (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1906); and Alice Brown, Rose MacLeod (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1908). Half a Rogue may have won its popularity, not through its material on politics and on trades unions, but through its approach to the risqué. Five liberal works took minor places on the Bookman's lists: Robert Grant, The Undercurrent (New York: Scribner, 1904); Irving Bacheller, Silas Strong (New York: Harper, 1906); Edith Wharton, The Fruit of the Tree (New York: Scribner, 1907); David Graham Phillips, The Second Generation (New York: Appleton, 1907); and Mary Stewart Cutting, The Wayfarers (New York: McClure, 1908). To these lists should be added three radical works: David Graham Phillips, The Cost (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1904); David Graham Phillips, The Plum Tree (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1905); and Friday, the Thirteenth. One could count among pertinent radical works David Graham Phillips, Old Wives for New (New York: Appleton, 1908) and Robert Herrick, Together (New York: Macmillan, 1908), both of which contain some economic matter. Rex Beach's The Spoilers (New York: Harper, 1906) is an exposé, but its primitivistic elements overshadow its economic.

The year 1903 accounts for four best-sellers; 1904 for four which were, however, less popular than those of 1903; 1905 for three; 1906 for seven; 1907 for three, all of them well known to literary historians but none of them high in the ranks of best-sellers; 1908 for six, if Old Wives for New and Together are counted in.

The number of probable readers may also be estimated on the basis of serializations in magazines of wide circulation. Data gathered on this topic were not complete, but were sufficient to indicate that this method, like others, permits no theory of straight-line development nor of regular cyclical changes.¹

Judgments and generalizations pronounced during the Roosevelt period by critics and by commercial observers should be weighed more minutely than I have weighed them. But I feel sure it is substantially accurate to say that political and slum stories attracted considerable attention during 1902 and 1903;² that

¹Writings serialized in the Curtis magazines, chiefly the Saturday Evening Post, were Letters from a Self-Made Merchant to his Son; The Pit; Old Gorgon Graham; Karl E. Harriman's The Girl and the Deal (Philadelphia: Jacobs, 1905), Florence M. Kingsley's The Singular Miss Smith (New York: Macmillan, 1904); Robert Barr's The Speculations of John Steele (New York: Stokes, 1905); Opie Read's An American in New York (Chicago: Thompson and Thomas, 1905); Charles Crewdson's Tales of the Road (Chicago: Thompson and Thomas, 1905); Samuel Merwin's The Road-Builders (New York: Macmillan, 1905); George Stratton's Richard Elliott, Financier (Boston: L. C. Page, 1906); G. H. Lorimer's Jack Spurlock, Prodigal (New York: Doubleday, Page, 1908); Edwin Lefevre's Sampson Rock of Wall Street (New York: Harper, 1907); John Corbin's The Cave Man (New York: Appleton, 1907); George Randolph Chester's Get-Rich-Quick Wallingford (Philadelphia: Altemus, 1908); and David Graham Phillips's The Fashionable Adventures of Joshua Craig (New York: Appleton, 1909). Everybody's Magazine ran Rex Beach's The Spoilers (New York: Harper, 1906) and Lawson's Friday, the Thirteenth. Wharton's The Fruit of the Tree was serialized in Scribner's Magazine. The Atlantic Monthly ran Robert Herrick's The Common Lot (New York: Macmillan, 1904) and Alice Brown's Rose MacLeod. Success ran Samuel Merwin's The Whip Hand (New York: Doubleday, Page, 1903) and Phillips's The Second Generation. McClure's Magazine ran Mary Stewart Cutting's The Wayfarers. French's The Man of the Hour was serialized in the Reader. The Smart Set published Guy Wetmore Carryl's The Lieutenant-Governor (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1903) and Cyrus Townsend Brady's The Corner in Coffee (New York: Dillingham, 1904).

²For political fiction see Joseph D. Miller, "Literature and Democracy," the Arena, XXVII (1902), 282-5; Wallace Rice, "Books in Political Fiction," the World Today, IV (1903), 726-30; F. Churchill Williams, "The Politician in Fiction," the Bookman, XV (1902), 463-5; and F. Churchill Williams, "Red Blood in Fiction," the World's Work, VI (1903), 3694-3700. For slum fiction and related works see H. W. Boynton, "Books New and Old," the Atlantic Monthly, LXXIX (1902), 417; "Literary Chat," Munsey's Magazine, XXVIII (1902-03), 758-9; *ibid.*, XXIX (1903), 444; and F. T. Cooper, the Bookman, XVII (1903), 515-16.

the romance-of-business tale appeared rather new;¹ that the economic problem-novel or propaganda-novel struck some bookmen as no novelty in 1903;² that the prevalence of fictional protests, exposes, and reform documents drew the greatest amount of notice in 1905 and 1906,³ but that certain observers were most aware of it in 1907; that 1905 and 1906 were the years when critics were most hospitable to liberal and radical writings, but that no decided change in attitude was discernible at two points where it might have been expected⁴ and that, in fact, the bases of judgment underlying the book reviews in most leading magazines--regardless of the publication's economic creed--changed relatively little in the last two and a half years of the period.⁵

If the three hundred thirty-one novels treated in this survey are studied, not as a unit, but by categories, one can find somewhat greater clearness of trend. But tendencies are by no means as clean-cut as might be thought. One reason is that in

¹A typical expression of this view is found in the review of The Grafters, "Books of the Week," the Outlook, LXXVI (1904), 1044-5.

²Ibid., LXXIII (1903), 886: "American politics and the complexities of capital and labor evidently offer attractive fields for our novelists." See also the review of The Socialist and The Prince (ibid., p. 737).

³Significant critiques are F. T. Cooper, "The Purpose Novel and Some Recent Books," the Bookman, XXII (1905), 131-5; Mary Moss, "Significant Tendencies in Current Fiction," the Atlantic Monthly, XCV (1905), 589-600; and Mary Moss, "Notes on New Novels," ibid., XCVII (1906), 43-59.

⁴That is, after Roosevelt's muckraker speech, and after the election of 1908. During the last four months of his administration Roosevelt was being heavily attacked, but not in fiction nor in reviews.

⁵One exception must be made. Sinclair's The Metropolis (New York: Moffat, Yard, 1908) and The Money Changers (New York: B. W. Dodge, 1908), Patterson's A Little Brother of the Rich, and London's The Iron Heel (New York: Macmillan, 1908) were treated more harshly by reviewers than strict consistency would have warranted. But one cannot infer that a reaction took place in 1908-09 against muckraking.

a large number of novels the author's purpose is obscure. In particular, several writers leave the reader in doubt whether they are glorifying business as romantic warfare or whether they are professing to expose its iniquities.¹ A similar class is made up of novels that take a mixed attitude toward machine politics and the boss--an attitude in which one can distinguish stress on the boss's humanness, defenses of political malfeasance, and a desire to meet readers' demands for exposure of evils.² There are, moreover, other sorts of "impure" documents. For instance, a few authors imply the desirability of drastic reforms of one kind or another, but openly urge only rather mild remedies.³ Again, several labor novels that profess a concern for laboring men and usually for trades unions also, are clearly anti-union in the actual direction of their thought, and some indeed are opposed to the rise of workers, organized or unorganized, to political and

¹The most important of these are Henry M. Hyde, The Buccaneers (New York: Funk, Wagnalls, 1904); Edwin Lefevre, The Golden Flood; W. C. Hudson, J. P. Dunbar (New York: B. W. Dodge, 1906); Dolores Bacon, In High Places (New York: Doubleday, Page, 1907); and Chester's Get-Rich-Quick-Wallingford, 1908 (serialized in 1906-07). Samuel Merwin's The Whip Hand might also be added.

²The chief of these productions published during and after 1902 were Alexander Black's Richard Gordon (Boston: Lothrop, 1902); William L. Alden's Drewitt's Dream (New York: Appleton, 1902); John McIntyre's The Ragged Edge (New York: McClure, Phillips, 1902); A. H. Lewis's The Boss (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1903); the anonymous John Van Buren, Politician (New York: Harper, 1905); David Graham Phillips's The Plum Tree; and Richard Barry's Sandy from the Sierras (New York: Moffat, Yard, 1906). Approximately the same attitude is found in Arthur Colton's Fort Argent (New York: Holt, 1904) and Joseph Altscheler's The Candidate (New York: Harper, 1905). Though such works had many predecessors, it seems likely that some of them were directly influenced by Francis Churchill Williams's J. Devlin--Boss (Boston: Lothrop, 1901).

³E.g., George Cary Eggleston, Blind Alleys (Boston: Lothrop, Lee and Shephard, 1906) and Florence M. Kingsley, Those Queer Browns (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1907). It should also be said that Edwin Arnold Brenholtz's The Recording Angel (Chicago: Kerr, 1905) indirectly urges class war but explicitly comes out for a sort of Fabianism, since it declares that some years of education must precede violence.

economic power.¹

When tabulation is made of the novels as divided into the three large categories under which the descriptions were placed, conservative and reactionary works total 85, protests and exposures 181, and works advocating remedies and reforms 65. The conservative and reactionary documents remain important throughout the period. With date of book publication taken as the criterion, the peak periods are 1903, 1905, and the months from September, 1908, to March, 1909. Reckoning by date of first publication, 1903 keeps its lead, but is pressed closely by 1904; 1905 becomes somewhat less important. If works which are indubitably liberal and radical are studied, one finds a noticeable increase in the desire for reform during 1903 as compared with 1902, a decline in the early part of 1904, and then a fairly high level from late 1904 till the end of the period. To compare the trend of conservative and reactionary documents with the trend of those which are unquestionably arguments in favor of liberalism and radicalism yields no positive conclusions. There is neither a negative nor a positive correlation throughout.

Because the three large categories give only a rough notion of the actual diversity of creed, the 331 books which are of any service in computation were divided into seven groups ranging from far right to far left. The results² were as follows:

¹The most important of these are French's The Man of the Hour, Arthur Stanwood Pier's The Ancient Grudge (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1905), Grace M. Cooke's The Grapple (Boston: L. C. Page, 1905), McGrath's Half a Rogue, and Arthur J. Eddy's Ganton and Company (Chicago: A. C. McClurg, 1908). Their attitude is like John Hay's in The Breadwinners (New York, 1883).

²The Iron Heel is included in the tabulation. If other Utopian works were added, the number of documents of the far left and the left would be greater by at least six. If some minor works which deal with political corruption entirely divorced from economic influences were to be added, right and right-center documents would be more numerous than the table shows.

TABLE I

Far right	17
Right	58
Right-center	44
Center	91
Left-center	63
Left	53
Far left	5

Taking the date of first publication, books of the extreme right appeared in every year except 1908; they were most numerous in 1903 and in 1905. If books of the right are added to them, no peaks and valleys of any significance are visible. It is true, however, that "the public be damned" attitude, rare throughout, is less frequent in the last two-thirds of the period. It is true also that a bow to reform is made more frequently during and after 1905 than before.¹ But the noticeable number of documents in 1905 and the early part of 1906 which take a conservative attitude toward labor's demands,² and the absence of real trends in

¹Particularly in Crewdson's Tales of the Road; Elliott Flower's The Best Policy (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1905); Nathaniel Fowler's Gumption (Boston: Small, Maynard, 1905); French's The Man of the Hour; Lefevre's The Golden Flood; Earle A. Walcott's Blindfolded (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1906); Andy Adams's Reed Anthony, Cowman (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1907); French's The Lion's Share (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1907); Chester's Get-Rich-Quick-Wallingford; Samuel Gardenhire's Purple and Homespun (New York: Harper, 1908), which tries to cut the ground out from under the socialists by showing that the views of a typical socialist and of a clean financier practically coincide; G. H. Lorimer's Jack Spurlock, Prodigal; Irving Bacheller's A Hand-Made Gentleman (New York: Harper, 1909); and a romance of business, Henry Kittchell Webster's A King in Khaki, which is one of several novels of the period that show a heartless financier defeated by tactics little less reprehensible than his own.

²These included Henry Holt's Sturmsee (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1905); The Man of the Hour, The Ancient Grudge; J. N. Wright's Where Copper Was King (Boston: Small, Maynard, 1905); and The Grapple. They included also Eugenia Frothingham's The Evasion (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1906) and Ellen Elizabeth Armes's John Varholm's Heir (Fitchburg, Massachusetts: Sentinel Printing Company, 1905), while Merwin's The Road-Builders can be considered as by implication an anti-union document. Some of the foregoing works emphasize that laborite violence which Jane Addams had treated in her "The Present Crisis in Trade-Union Morals," the North American Review, CLXXIX (1904), 178-93. It is possible that the anti-union activities and propaganda of the National Association of Manufacturers influenced several novelists.

the fiction serialized in Curtis magazines, go far toward nullifying any attempt to see a serious decline in conservatism as the period advanced.

Nor do the productions which were classed as protests, as exposés, and as exponents of reform enable the student to be much more definite. It has already been said that they manifest a greater desire for reform in 1903 than in 1902, and a fairly high level of desire from the autumn of 1904 onward. But the mere desire for reform may be a weak and nebulous sentiment. Such, indeed, it seems in many supposedly liberal writings of each year, and particularly in a half dozen of 1905 and 1906.¹ Hence it would be advisable to generalize concerning the particularity and strength with which reforms were urged. But unfortunately no simple generalizations can be made. Several things can, indeed, be said. One is that beginning early in 1906 there was a noticeable increase in reform novels² and also an increase in writings which were fundamentally exposés but which were affiliated rather closely with reform fiction. One can say, further, that from 1906 onward there was somewhat less satisfaction with mild remedies and mere palliatives. The Single Tax works of the decade

¹Frances Aymar Mathews, Billy Duane (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1905); Molly E. Seawell, Mrs. Darrell (New York: Macmillan, 1905), more of a society novel than a political one; Arthur Goodrich, The Balance of Power (New York: Outing Publishing Company, 1906), a story which aims at offending neither laborites nor anti-laborites and whose political material is copious but superficial; Frederick Palmer, Lucy of the Stars (New York: Scribner, 1906), wherein the secondary hero is an honest politician; Will Payne, When Love Speaks (New York: Macmillan, 1906), exposing varied kinds of political and economic rottenness in Michigan but portraying the half-failure of a reformer; and Alice Winter's Jewel Weed (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1906), a melange that exploits the Ames regime in Minneapolis and that ends as a satire on the craze for Oriental pseudo-philosophies.

²Exclusive of Utopian writings they averaged about nine a year. They were well over the average in every year from 1906 to 1908 inclusive. Five were published in the first six months of 1909. Only four were issued in 1904.

are confined to the last half of it,¹ the advocacy of municipal ownership becomes more frequent, and expressions of sympathy with socialism in works which are not primarily socialistic propaganda become more numerous after 1905.² Moreover, the Machiavellian or defeatist tone visible in a number of works of 1902 to June, 1905, dies down.³ These facts are significant.

On the other hand, there are valid reasons why the cumulative or cyclical progress of liberalism and radicalism must not be exaggerated. For instance, the Single Tax writings of 1906-09 are too few, and differ too much among themselves, to serve as important evidence. Again, defeatism is not absent⁴ in the last

¹Frederic C. Howe, Confessions of a Monopolist, (Chicago: Public Publishing Company, 1906); Henry George, Jr., The Romance of John Bainbridge (New York: Macmillan, 1906); Herbert Quick, The Broken Lance (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1907); and Estella Brokau, The Soul of the World (Pasadena, California: Equitist Publishing Company, 1909). Related to these is Alfred Crozier's The Magnet (Philadelphia: Funk, Wagnalls, 1908). Only The Broken Lance and The Soul of the World contain much overt Single Tax propaganda. Herbert Quick's Aladdin and Company (Boston: Holt, 1904) is, on the surface, a romance of real estate speculation; few general readers could have suspected that it might be an indirect plea for the single tax.

²E.g., Robert Morss Lovett, Richard Gresham (New York: Macmillan, 1904); Arthur Henry, The Unwritten Law (New York: Barnes, 1905); Leroy Scott, The Walking Delegate (New York: Doubleday, Page, 1905); F. U. Adams, The Bottom of the Well (New York: Dillingham, 1906); Klein and Hornblow, The Lion and the Mouse; John Ames Mitchell, The Silent War (New York: Life Publishing Company, 1906); Isaac K. Friedman, The Radical (New York: Appleton, 1907); Phillips, The Second Generation; Leroy Scott, To Him That Hath (New York: Doubleday, Page, 1907); Enoch Johnson, A Captain of Industry (Boston: C. M. Clark, 1908); and George Varney, Out of the Depths (Philadelphia: Griffith, Rowland, 1909).

³The reference is not only to the works named in note 2, p. 9 but also to Elliott Flower's The Spoilsman (Boston: L. C. Page, 1903), in which two honest Chicago aldermen lose money and friends on account of their integrity; William R. Lighton's The Ultimate Moment (New York: Harper, 1903), and Upton Sinclair's Prince Hagen (Boston: L. C. Page, 1903).

⁴See Will Payne, When Love Speaks; Maude Radford Warren, The Land of the Living (New York: Harper, 1908); Newton Ridgely, By Law of Might (New York: H. A. Simmons, 1908); and Evelyn Barnett, The Dragnet (New York: Huebsch, 1909). The first two are political novels, the last two are financial novels.

part of the period. In the third place, although pro-labor novels increase in numbers during the period, analysis of them shows no great growth of sympathy with the program of organized labor.¹ In the fourth place, writings whose main purpose is to advocate socialism are scattered throughout the seven and a half years, on no discernible line;² and expressions of sympathy with socialism which are set forth after 1904 in non-socialistic works were sometimes too general to mean much or were even uncomprehending.³

¹Job Taylor's Broken Links (Boston: C. M. Clark, 1908), Johnson's A Captain of Industry, Wharton's The Fruit of the Tree, Phillips's The Second Generation, William L. Smith's William Updick (New York: Neale, 1908), and even Toilers and Idlers (New York: Wilshire, 1907) by John McMahon, a socialist, portray the improvement of labor as coming from men in the capitalist class. This same idea as to the source of improvement is found in such novels of 1902-05 as Arthur Newell's A Knight of the Toilers (Philadelphia: Marsh, 1905); but in the Reverend David N. Beach's The Annie Laurie Mine (Boston: Pilgrim Press, 1903) and Gwendolen Overton's Captains of the World (New York: Macmillan, 1904), aid comes to laborers from a workman, even though from a workman who does not hold a proletarian philosophy. Moreover, in Broken Links and A Captain of Industry strikes are looked on with no more sympathy than in such a pro-labor novel as the Reverend Matt. Stan. Kemp's Boss Tom (Akron, Ohio: Saalfeld, 1904), a product of the coal strike of 1902. Finally, several of the strongest pro-labor novels of 1905-09 are interested almost solely in the plight of the child worker. Such are Marie Van Vorst's Amanda of the Mill (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1905), John T. Moore's The Bishop of Cottontown (Philadelphia: J. G. Winston, 1906), and Mary Fenollosa's Red Horse Hill (Boston: Little, Brown, 1909).

²Linn Boyd Porter, Riverfall (New York: Dillingham, 1903); Morrison I. Swift, The Monarch Billionaire (New York: Ogilvie, 1903); Vida Scudder, A Listener in Babel (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1903); Walter M. Raymond, Rebels of the New South (Chicago: Kerr, 1904); Mary Beals, The Rebel at Large (Girard, Kansas: Appeal to Reason Publishing Company, 1905); Brenholtz, The Recording Angel; Walter Hurt, The Scarlet Shadow (Girard, Kansas: Appeal to Reason Publishing Company, 1907); Morris Winchevsky, Stories of the Struggle (Chicago: Kerr, 1908), consisting of tales and sketches ranging from 1893 to 1908 in date of composition; and, among Utopian works, William Dean Howells, Through the Eye of the Needle (New York: Harper, 1907), Sinclair's The Industrial Republic, C. A. Steere, When Things Were Doing (Chicago: Kerr, 1907), and London, The Iron Heel. Henry Berman's The Worshipers (New York: Grafton Press, 1906) can be called socialistic.

³As in Klein and Hornblow, The Lion and the Mouse; F. U. Adams, The Bottom of the Well; Johnson, A Captain of Industry; and even Phillips, The Second Generation.

Another and rather important reason for refusing to lay great emphasis on the growth of reform fiction in the last half of the Roosevelt administration is this: A dozen reform and quasi-reform novels, several of them important, present a naive view of the means by which evils will be overcome. That is, they portray the conversion of a misdoer and show him as turning his fortune over to his victims or to society at large.¹ Even though the restitution sometimes involves the municipalization or nationalization of public utilities, one can hardly see that these novels represent any advance over several of 1902-04 which depict the triumph of liberalism.²

There still remains the possibility that at some time in the final years of the period there became visible two or more sharply distinct trends within liberal and radical documents themselves--for example, a movement backward toward the semi-Jacksonian, semi-Christian tone that can be found in a few earlier productions,³ and a movement or movements toward some more drastic

¹Chiefly Theodore W. Nevin's Confessions of a Modern Midas (Pittsburgh: T. W. Nevin, 1906) and its shortened version entitled Ralph Ranscomb, Banker (New York: Neale, 1908); Edwin Asa Dix, Prophet's Landing (New York: Scribner, 1907); the Reverend Basil King's A Giant's Strength (New York: Harper, 1907); Alice French's The Lion's Share; Mrs. Lucy M. Thruston's Jenifer (Boston: Little, Brown, 1907); Crozier's The Magnet; Grace D. Litchfield's The Supreme Gift (Boston: Little, Brown, 1908); Isaac Stevens's The Liberators (New York: B. W. Dodge, 1908); and also William Allen White's A Certain Rich Man. Eggleston's Blind Alleys bears some relation to these works.

²E.g. Reginald Wright Kauffman and Edward C. Carpenter, The Chasm (New York: Appleton, 1903) and Bushrod James, The Political Freshman (Philadelphia: Bushrod James, 1902). These two novels put much more trust in the power of mere goodness to transform evil conditions than did most other writings of 1902-04, even the Reverend Charles M. Sheldon's The Reformer (Chicago: Advance Publishing Company, 1903), whose hero is modeled after District Attorney Jerome of New York and whose heroine is modeled after Jane Addams.

³James, The Political Freshman; Beach, The Annie Laurie Mine; Sheldon, The Reformer; and Mrs. Edith Eustis, Marion Manning (New York: Harper, 1902).

doctrine(s). Investigation of this possibility was without result. Except for Steere's When Things Were Doing, London's The Iron Heel, and possibly Sinclair's The Industrial Republic (all of them Utopian romances), novels of the left and far left had been pretty fully anticipated earlier, and, moreover, are not sharply separable from "semi-Jacksonian, semi-Christian" writings. In other words, at no time between 1902 and 1909 can one segregate liberal and radical writings into mutually exclusive, let alone opposing, classes.

It is of course possible to offer generalizations concerning a few sub-types of writings not yet mentioned in this article, or touched on cursorily. Thus, the novels which deal primarily with the dominance of capitalists over university teaching or administration are confined almost entirely to the early years of the period, when the number of dismissals of university professors on account of "radicalism" which had taken place between 1894 and 1901 was fairly fresh in memory.¹ Again, concerning novels published by religious houses and novels published by church officials one can say that the spread of "the social gospel" is visible, and that fiction lagged behind non-fiction in embracing this attitude.² In the third place, novels attacking

¹The novels referred to are Anna Robeson Burr's The Millionaire's Son (Boston: Estes, 1903); Herbert M. Hopkins's The Torch (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1903); James Weber Linn's The Chameleon (New York: McClure, Phillips, 1903); Anna M. Sholl's The Law of Life (New York: Appleton, 1903); and Anna Robeson Burr's The Jessop Bequest (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1907). The fullest of these is The Torch, which utilized the dismissal of E. A. Ross from Leland Stanford.

²The most important documents are the Reverend William F. Gibbons's Those Black-Diamond Men (New York: Revell, 1902), written before the great coal strike; Florence M. Kingsley's The Needle's Eye (New York: Funk, Wagnalls, 1902), dealing with slum clearance; the Reverend George Van D. Morris's A Man for A' That (Cincinnati: Jennings and Pye, 1902), dealing with slum clearance and with institutional churches; Beach's The Annie Laurie Mine; the Reverend George Claude Lorimer's The Master of Millions

Rockefeller and the Standard Oil were not numerous until Tarbell and Lawson had published their exposures.¹

What the foregoing facts mean depends on one's political and economic creed and one's theories concerning the virtues proper to polemical fiction. The radical, even the liberal, of today is bound to find the conservative economic documents blindly vindictive; the conservative political ones archaically sanguine or else, in their wise if old defenses of the machine, spiteful toward reformers; most of the liberal writings vitiated by the contrast between the fury of their incidents and the pallid goodwill of their basic attitude (where that can be discerned). Both ignorance and commercialism were widespread, leading now to a journalistic "radicalism," now to easy cynicism, according as the publics that were sought, the trend of newspaper and magazine exposures, and such outward events as major strikes or election

(New York: Revell, 1903), with material on London slums; Sheldon's The Reformer; Reverend J. W. Johnston's The Mystery of Miriam (Boston: Turner, 1904), which has a few uncomprehending passages on speculation; Sheldon's The Heart of the World; Harold Kramer's Hearts and the Cross (Boston: Lothrop, Lee and Shepard, 1906), a melange with attacks on political corruption; William J. Dawson's A Prophet in Babylon (New York: Revell, 1907); King's A Giant's Strength; Florence Kingsley's Those Queer Browns; Edward Steiner's The Mediator (New York: Revell, 1907); Reverend Franklin Gifford's The Belle Islers (Boston: Lothrop, Lee and Shepard, 1908), a most savage assault on Manchesterian economics; Elizabeth Neff's Altars to Mammon (New York: Stokes, 1908); and Varney's Out of the Depths.

¹Gertrude Potter Daniels, Eshak--the Oppressor (Chicago: Rand, McNally, 1902); Mrs. Fremont Older, The Giants (New York: Appleton, 1905); David Graham Phillips, The Deluge (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1905); Francis Newton Thorpe, The Divining Rod (Boston: Little, Brown, 1905); Klein and Hornblow, The Lion and the Mouse; "Allan McIvor," The Mechanic (New York: Richie, 1906); Stratton, Richard Elliott, Financier; William W. Canfield, The Spotter (New York: R. F. Fenno, 1907). The Standard Oil plays a part in Francis Lynde's The Grafters (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1904), which has allusions to the Standard's fight with the independent operators in Kansas. Rockefeller is almost certainly to be seen in the Harley of William M. Raine's Ridgway of Montana (New York: Dillingham, 1909), which deals with F. Augustus Heinze and his fight against the copper trust. The story had been published serially in 1906.

results seemed to dictate. And from the whole 330 novels there emerge hardly a score of living characters.

These charges are not new; they have been made before against those 30 novels known to former students. Increasing by tenfold the documents studied does nothing but extend the indictment. In fact, it takes from Phillips, Tarkington, Churchill, Herrick, and White several of the few virtues left to them; for it shows that the last four authors had been widely anticipated and that Phillips, a pioneer in The Master-Rogue, soon dropped back into the ruck doctrinally, while continuing to attract the attention of a large public by flamboyant characters and by diatribes and pseudo-epigrams which seemed equally flamboyant though most were not actually new.

Nor can one say that this further dimming of the five novelists' merits is compensated for by "discoveries." The era produced no Melvilles. It is true that The Boss, though less original than Chamberlain thinks,¹ has a crude force, and that specialists may be interested in eleven minor books for their content² and in three for their literary qualities.³

But even half the novels named as perhaps worth reviving are, like Phillips's and Herrick's, less important for political and economic material than for their treatment of women and sex.

¹Farewell to Reform, p. 145.

²George K. Turner, The Taskmasters (New York: McClure, Phillips, 1902); Richardson and Quint, On Satan's Mount; Philip Payne, The Mills of Man (Chicago: Rand, McNally, 1903); Alice Wilson, The Wars of Peace (Boston: Little, Brown, 1903); Lynde, The Grafters; Lewis, The President (New York: Barnes, 1904); Phil V. Mighels, The Ultimate Passion (New York: Harper, 1905); Scott, The Walking Delegate; Quick, The Broken Lance; Corbin, The Cave Man; and Dawson, A Prophet in Babylon.

³Lovett, Richard Gresham; and Gamaliel Bradford, Between Two Masters (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1906) and Mathew Porter (Boston: L. C. Page, 1908).

Thus a by-product of the investigation is at least as significant as the findings on political and economic doctrines; and this of course brings up a question on which one or two previous students have spoken their minds: Did the novelists of 1902-09 nullify their work by so badly confusing ethical with economic and political questions that they failed even to envisage the problems which they hoped to help solve?

My study leads me to agree, with one qualification--that several writers did not stress ethics sufficiently. Most such men were unduly absorbed with techniques, political or financial or industrial. Not that this was always merely an example of the American interest in clockwork: some novelists felt, laudably enough, that a comprehension of political and economic procedures must precede moral judgments upon them. But unfortunately these well-intentioned authors could seldom resist a happy ending which blotted out their expository aim. Worse, the few truly dispassionate novelists gave only a picture of unhuman creatures scurrying about for sub-human reasons. From this latter type of novel there did, indeed, evolve one brand of naturalism--but not during the Roosevelt period.

In short, nearly all my 330 novels fell into melodrama, whether evangelical in purpose or esthetically purposeless; into glorification of a (simple) moral creed at the expense of economic and political truthfulness; into ephemeral factualism; or into mere technology.

Not much, then, remains to the credit of novelists who professed to treat economic and political problems in the years 1902-09. What these authors can receive a modicum of praise for is that they publicized, in a form somewhat longer-lived than newspaper and most magazine articles, a great mass of facts which

could be utilized by later novelists whose motives were less commercial, whose perspective was wider, and whose attitudes were at once more liberal and more self-consistent.¹

Just how far these later authors (of 1910-17) went in imposing significance and an esthetic pattern on the facts compiled by their predecessors, no one yet knows. Indeed, no one knows how numerous were those who can be called predecessors of the Progressive novelists. With all praise to Parrington, Hicks, and Chamberlain for brilliant inferences drawn from a few novels which might or might not prove to be representative, we must still point out that the period 1902-09 is not, as they tended to think, a closed one. The present paper, and still more the dissertation many of whose findings it sums up, make clear that one-third of the political and economic novels of 1902 and early 1903 took for granted on the part of readers an acquaintance--some, a familiarity--with evils and solutions² which, previous historians have incorrectly thought, got almost no fictional attention between

¹The "great mass of facts" referred to includes particularly material on: stock exchange speculation and related evils connected with "high finance"; the more melodramatic techniques and results of labor warfare; and the methods used by the boss and the political machine both in getting votes and in combining forces with crooked business men.

²The works of 1902 and early 1903 referred to include the first three listed in note 2 of page 9; Henry K. Webster's Roger Drake, Captain of Industry (New York: Macmillan, 1902); a belated Populistic tract, Elizabeth Higgins's Out of the West (New York: Harper, 1902); Charles Datchet's Morchester (New York: Putnam, 1902); Turner's The Taskmasters; Richardson and Quint's On Satan's Mount; F. T. Hill's The Minority (New York: Stokes, 1902); E. L. Vincent's Margaret Bowlby (Boston: Lothrop, 1902); David Graham Phillips's A Woman Ventures (New York: Stokes, 1902); and novels that deal with the Chicago traction situation--George Horton's The Long Straight Road (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1902) and James Weber Linn's The Second Generation (New York: Macmillan, 1902). Moreover, Philip Payne's The Mills of Man, though published late enough in 1903 that it might have been influenced by the magazine muckrakers, bears no evidence of having used their findings; and the same can be said of a labor-problem novel I have already referred to--Wilson's The Wars of Peace.

1896 and 1903¹ and not much attention prior to 1896. That a high percentage of the topics treated by Rooseveltian novelists had been used before, and by other than Populistic and "radical" authors, is also implied by my trial bibliography for 1865-1901. The same list further implies--though less plainly--that intelligent middle class readers were familiar, from the early 1880's at any rate, not alone with most topics treated but with most attitudes set forth by the fiction of 1902-09. It would, of course, be folly to deny a great increase in the American people's

¹Parrington, p. 187: "Most frequently Lincoln Steffens is followed and the human side of the 'Boss' is 'played up' equally with his political cunning. It is the characteristic journalistic touch--a bit cheap but immensely effective. As the movement of naturalism gained headway it became increasingly apparent that the 'Boss' was only a part of the 'System,' and the political novel merged in the economic."

Chamberlain, p. 145: "The magazine movement was foreshadowed, ever so faintly, in the fiction of 1902 and 1903. . . . The Boss, published early [sic] in 1903, contained a recognition of facts that it would take Lincoln Steffens several years to discover for himself and the McClure's public. The Spoilsman [sic], by Elliott Flower, written around public utility politics in Chicago, was another product of 1903. Fiction, coevally with the staff of McClure's, had learned again the connection between 'the interests' and political manipulation--and the American political novel, which had lapsed into desuetude with the coming of McKinley, perked up as the public . . . turned to contemplate the terrible shame of the cities." The further statement (*ibid.*, p. 149) that "the real muckrake article . . . did not make important definitive appearance until Alfred Henry Lewis's The Boss" is, for all of its qualifications, an exaggeration. The first novel of 1902-09 which strikes me as comparable to the magazine muckraking that began in September, 1902, is On Satan's Mount, published seven months before The Boss.

More important, on pp. 146 and 176 Chamberlain says or implies that the economic novel developed out of the political during the Roosevelt period. The opposite is more nearly true.

Hicks, p. 176: ". . . muckrakers, by arousing a widespread interest in the operation of politicians and business men, created an audience for the novel of politics and business. In the second place, they revealed to the novelist the dramatic value in the lives of the great financiers and big bosses and in the struggle for supremacy. And finally, they helped to define the various attitudes the novelist might take towards this material." Hicks's first sentence needs little revision--the substitution of "a much wider audience" for "an audience." That the implications of his last two sentences are faulty is shown not only by p. 9 of the present paper, but, more fully still, by my trial bibliography.

knowledge of political and economic evils, and an increase greater still in their indignation over those evils, between 1886--indeed, 1896--and 1906. But the question is: how great, how rapid, how steady was this increase? How many hills and valleys on the trail from Keenan to Poole, from Lapham to Cowperwood? I had hoped that the novels of 1902-09 would permit some valid inferences concerning this problem. They do not. Parrington, Chamberlain, and Hicks remain, despite the minor changes which their generalizations demand, the best guides thus far for the five decades between the Civil War and the World War. A full picture of that half-century will, so my study implies, add very greatly to the bibliography on which these historians have based their statements, and may modify some of those statements; but what they have said about the esthetic weaknesses of American political and economic fiction will not, I believe, be significantly changed. Certainly my investigation of the novels of the period in which one would have expected to find some work both sound in content and good in technique has only stripped from the Rooseveltian writers many of the few laurels which Parrington and his successors left them with. And I see no reason to suppose that the novels of 1865-1900, or many of 1910-17, should be greatly superior.

